

Jitante Stotram Commentary

(A translation of the Jitante Stotra vyakhyAnam graced by Sri PeriyavAchchAn Pillai)

Introduction

Jitante stotram is a Rigveda khilam meaning an infrequented portion. Just as Purushasuktam which propounds the tenets, exists in all Sruthis, so all so, this Jitante is proclaimed in the scripture and itihAsa purAnAs as a mahamantram and classified as confidential on par with tirumantram. This Jitante, being a portion of the Apourusheya vedas, it may be questioned as to how it exists in the other man-made works like ItihAsa and PurAnas. The answer is: Khilam is a highly infrequented portion. The Sutrakaras have studied vedas with khilam portions. They have mentioned and included Jitante as a mantram in ItihAsa PurAnas as evidenced by the quotation "jitanta iti mantreNa ".

The residents of Swetadwlpa, who have yielded their hearts to the virtues of KshlrAbdhi nAtha like His beauty and handsomeness, sing this Jitante hymn. It is graded as a stotram as it is dearest to the lord, who is fond of praises (stavapriya). This stotram appears in a place hard to access even to BrahmA and others. How possibly could it then find a place in ItihAsa and PurAnas and become accessible to humans? Here is how :- When Narada bhagavan was on his way to Sweta DwIpa to visit and worship KshlrAbdhi NATHan, who is the God revealed by this mantram, he saw sages Ekata Dvita and Trita doing penance. Narada thought, "how can I hope to see the object which even these sages are unable to approach" and returned and asked them "What is then appropriate for me to do?". They replied, "In this place, the stotram, with which, the residents of Sweta dwIpa, praise KshlrAbdhi NATHan has been obtained and learnt by us by virtue of our long penances. You may learn it from us and recite it every day". Narada learnt this Jitante from them and was on his way, when on a mountain called Jayantha, one Kutumbi (sic) , who came to know from Narada of the episode of the birth of this stotram from BrahmA, insisted on learning it and accepted it from Narada. From then on, it was written (by Kutumbi) in ItihaAsa and PurAnas and became available to all devotees of the God.

When we contemplate on the inner meaning of this stotram it appears like the commentary on prapatti. Sri Parasara Bhattar has said of this, in a muktaka (free) slokam,

avidyAto deve paribhridhatayA va viditayA
sva bhakter bhUmna va jagati gatimanyAm aviduShAm
gatir gamyashchAsow haririti jitantAhvaya mano:
rahasyam vyAjahre sa khalu bhagavAn Shaunaka muni:

meaning that the eligible candidates for prapatti are ajnas, sarvajnas and bhakti paravashars. ajna is one who does not have jnana and shakti for attaining God; sarvajna is one who knows that God can not be measured in terms of space, time, and other mundane objects and thus does not put any effort to attain God, knowing that God is unattainable by any other means; bhakti paravashan is one who although having the necessary jnana nd shakti is unable to follow the prescribed rules for attaining God due to addiction to bhakti. These three types of persons know of no other means except God. For them the target and means of reaching it are both, the Lord Himself. This is the actual secret meaning, of the mantram called Jitante, which was expounded by that omniscient sage bhagavan Saunaka.

Atma is an asset and God is its owner. One who is solely the servant of the Lord alone can be the adhikari for dvayam. This swami-dasa relationship exists since time sans a beginning. Not realising this due to a long connection with Nature, and due to Ahankara and Mamakara, the Atma usurps the Lord's qualities of swamitva and swatantrya and becomes a robber of the soul (Atmaapahaari). The lord seeing the Atmas which are under opposition to Him as exemplified by Hiranyakasipu saying "paramesvara samjno ajna kimanyo mayyavasthite" and Ravana saying " dvidhaa bhajyeyam apyevam na nameyam tu kasyachit", thought that these Atmas cannot be redeemed with the help of Shaastras; they are addicts to sense objects; so let me attract them using their own addiction by showing My beauty and other gunas. He first generated their taste for beauty and once attracted by beauty He became their means of reaching Himself and once they stuck to Him as the Upaaya, He became their prapya. These aspects are dealt with in this prabandham of Jitante.

Thus, the first slokam briefly states the target and the mode of reaching it. The further slokams elaborate on this aspect as opined by Sri Parasara Bhattar in his nirvaham.

Alternately, the first two slokas describe the prapya and prapaka and the further slokams justify the above by describing the Sharanyatva of the Lord according to TiruNaraiyur Araiya's nirvaham. When it is appropriate to state first, the Sharanyatva and then describe the prapya and prapaka, why is it done in the reverse here? Araiya opined that this is done in the analogy of the first occurrence of God's union in "tiruvaaNai ninnaaNai " and then followed by separation as "peraavaaNai" in muniye nAnmukane decade.

Stotram 1

jitante pundarIkAkSha namsthE vishvabhAvana |
namasthE stu hriShIkEsha mahApuruSha pUrvaja ||

Meaning:

pundarIkAkSha - oh lotus eyed, this object called soul has been conquered by you

nama: - this is not mine

tE - This is yours

vishvabhAvana - oh creator of all the universe

hriShIkEsha - controller of senses

mahApuruSha - oh greatest among the givers, munificent

pUrvaja - born prior to all

namstEstu - this soul should be divested of my ownership and should become your rightful possession.

Introduction:

This sloka tells how the Lord conquers the straying person by displaying His beauty and makes him pray to Him as the decided goal.

The straying person has taken a vow as it were of deviating and diverging from God (cf. yAdAnum paRRi nIngum viratam) and indulging in other sense objects. The Lord on the other hand, chases the person as it were, severs his interest in the sense objects, inculcates svarUpa jnAna in him, and pledges not to return without the gaining ownership of the person. Whenever he strays to other objects of interest, He displays His beauty and conquers him (cf. irundAn kandukondu). Being pleased with the person's defeat, He asks "who is defeated?"; then the person replies (cf. tORROm mada nenjam emberumAn nAraNarku) that "victory is Yours. Is there something that You cannot conquer by the brahmAstra of Your lotus like eyes. (pundarIkAkShatva)". After all it is only by way of the eyes that living beings can impress influence and enslave each other. So here it says that You are conquering us with the help of lotus-eyes. (cf. iNaik koottham koLO ariyEn)

A self-willed person can be brought around by shAstras but to bring around a viShaya pravaNa, (one who indulges in sense objects), is there any other implement better than beauty.

Commentary:

namastE -- Now who conquered whom and whose property? I have stolen the Atma belonging to You. You conquered me and took back Your property. (cf. aham api na mama bhagavata Eva aham asmi). The word - nama: - denotes surrendering.

namastestu -- Kindly prevent the usurpation of the soul by me and appropriate it for Yourself. When God is helping me by creating my interest in Him for His benefit, why should I, a chetana rush and solicit for His slavery (kainkaryam)? The moment He created interest for a chetana in Him and enlightened him with svarUpa jnAna, the next spontaneous thing for the chetana is to wake up and solicit for His kainkaryam, in line with what is appropriate for his svarUpa.

pundarIkAkSha -- When the hunchback dwarf (kubjA) woman's hunch was removed by Lord krishna, she requested krishna to come to her house for enjoyment. (cf. vastrE pragrihya govinda, mama gEham vrajEti vy). Likewise, here too God removes a hunch of the Atma - chetana, in the form of ahankAra and

mamakAra by displaying His beautiful eyes. When the svatantrya of the chetana is removed and pAratantrya shines through, he becomes fit for the spirit and taste of kainkaryam.

Similarly, the Lord impressed the florist, mAIAkArar, by His beauty, made him fall at His feet several times and made him offer all the garlands and accepted his services (cf. puna: puna: praNamyAha mAIAkArO ativismita:).

vishva bhAvana -- creator of the universe. For a Person who could create this woe-begone universe from nothing, can He not infuse goodness in me who am existing? Is it a difficult task for Him? After all, what is His objective in creation -- to pick out at least a few mumukShus after the refinement of chetanas. Obtaining mumukshus is for His pleasure.

hriShIkEsha -- At the beginning of creation, there was no diversion for the souls to stray from God. Now there are the incorrigible sense organs and the objects for indulgence, to drag the souls away from God. Hence You can control the senses and help me by reining my senses. "yo vAchi tiShThan , yashchakShuShi tiShThan " etc. I, the chetana, is ever since creation, submissive to the sense organs.

mahAporusha -- Even if one is omnipotent why will anyone do what all he can? - because You are mahAporusha -- You are omnipotent, but do You use Your potency? yes, You are the greatest of all liberal, munificent persons. You gift the desires of Your bhaktas so profusely that they do not have to beg You again. You and Your assets are all spread out for the benefit of Your devotees. (cf. sa sarvAn arthinO drishTvA samEtya pratinandya cha). This munificence is explained in practice, next.

pUrvaJa -- in creation, in incarnation and in being upAya, You are at the head of all gains and losses. In every event, the gains, fruits and losses are primarily Yours. Just as in 'bahusyam prajAyEya' the benefit and pride of descending through many bodies, is His own, so also, in 'EkAkI na ramEta', the displeasure of loneliness is also His own. Even in incarnation, as in 'sambhavAmi Atma mAyayA' the incarnation is by His free will for the sake of steering a few good souls towards Himself. If one asks that He took birth owing to the pleas of devas, as in 'sa hi devair arthito jajne' ; the answer is no; it was an excuse; but protection of saadhus was His main benefit; as in ' paritrANaya sadhUnAm'. This is just as in the case of Arjuna; in the guise of encouraging him to wage war, Krishna discoursed on the yoga of bhakti towards Himself. As in 'upAyopEyatve tadiha tava tatvam', just as the virtue of upEyatva is eternal to Him, so also the virtue of upAyatva. His upAyatva does not surface merely when a chetana accepts Him. Sri Parasara Bhattar said in SriRangarajastavam: "Upanishad declares that SrimanNarayaNa, appropriates for Himself for His own benefit, all the chits and achits by the processes of creation, control and protection. So UpAyatva and UpEyatva are His Svarupa and not mere qualities. Therefore, You who sleeps in Srirangam, I do take refuge in You without any pretext and subterfuge ".

Even during the time of bhoga or enjoyment, He, to show His precedence over the gopis in five lakh houses, keeps the flute over His mouth and plays it. And for a chetana who develops a keen desire to sustain this bhoga, uninterruptedly, He shows him the way so that he may not have to search for Him and awaits his arrival at the Vaikuntham along with His consort Shree. (shriyA sArdham jagatpati: AsthE Vishnur achinthyAtmA bhaktair bhAgavathais saha).

Stotram 2

devAnAm dAnavAnAm cha sAmAnyam adhideivatam |
sarvadA charaNa dvandvam vrajAmi sharaNam tava ||

Meaning:

devAnam -- for those having devotion to Vishnu
dAnavAnAm cha -- and for those without devotion to God
sarvadA -- always
sAmAnyam adhideivatam -- equally accessible for surrender
tava -- your
charaNadvandvam -- the pair of feet
sharaNam -- as my means to reach the goal
vrajAmi -- I determine

Introduction:

In the previous sloka, he determines the goal and implements the means in order to attain it. He set sight on the best goal of all goals and employs the best means available. In this world which is replete with those whose only aim is procuring son, cattle and eatables, those who only cherish getting heaven by praying to gods as the accomplishment, those who surrendering to Ishvara, expect to obtain designations of Indra and others, it is hard to come by even one person whose cherished credo is to involve in uninterrupted service at the feet of the Lord who is the supreme of all, possessing all auspicious qualities, and who is the sovereign of both empires. As in "manuShyANAm sahasreShu" and "sa mahAtmA sudurlabha:", such a person hardly exists even from the standpoint of the Lord Himself. Similarly, when considering the means, while some cling to means like karmayoga etc, while some others cling to God's names (as in 'kim japan muchyatE jantur janma samsAra bandhanAt'), while some resort to special locations (as in 'dEshO ayam sarvakAmadhuk') and so on thus there are numerous means in correspondence with the diverse mentalities of different groups of people. However, in this samsAra, it is rare to find one resorting to so easy and unhazardous a means as siddhopayam. This is concerned with such a siddhopayam. If it is intended to comment on dvaya, then why start with determining the prApya? It is because, it is on account of the prApya that the interest in it is roused and other things followed. Hence, first the determination of the prApya and then the acceptance of an appropriate means to reach it.

Commentary:

devAnAm dAnavAnAm cha sAmAnyam adhideivatam -- There is no eligibility constraint for the acceptance of this means. dEvas and dAnavAs are equally eligible. devas are defined as those who are classified as favourable to the Master (God). dAnavAs are those classified as unfavourably disposed to God. "dvow bhUta sargow lokesmin daiva Asura Eva cha" the whole creation is classified into daiva and Asura prakritis. "sAmAnyam adhidaivatam charaNa dvandvam" -- the pair of feet that is common to all . Not that it is common to all by virtue of relationship but by virtue of equal accessibility by all. How? when they are opposed to God, He considers them as unfavourable to the devotees and does away with them. cf "avuNarkenRum shalam purindu angaruLillAttanmaiyaLAN". Hence, the pair of His feet like Sunshine is for everyone to feel possessive about and to surrender to, for everyone irrespective of lowness by birth character and conduct or highness by virtue of the same. Afterall, it was accessible to Vibheeshana who had eaten the alms thrown by Ravana and justifyingly said "sarvaloka sharaNyAya rAghavAya". The word of the Lord who is sharaNya is "samOham sarvabhUtEshu". He becomes highly sorrowful when people are in distress. "vyasanEshu manuShyANAm". The people are symbolic of everyone that can surrender to Him.

When it comes to the event of surrendering, He says "yadi vA rAvaNa: svayam". "ellA ulakum tozhum AdimUrti " and "podu ninRa ponnam kazhal" said nammAzhvar.

sarvadA -- Even in the event of opposition, the tiruvadis eagerly await one's desire for protection. cf " pApAnAm va shubhAnAm vA ... kAryam karuNam AryENa.." This verily is the purport for the "anAlochita vishESha...loka sharaNya".

charaNa dvandvam -- points out the beauty of the twinness of the pair of feet. They double up as best means for the goal and again as the object of adoration after attaining the goal.

sharaNam vrajAmi -- I accept as the means. The afore-mentioned common acceptability and accessibility by all is regarding this siddhopayam. The other kinds of means (sAdhanAntaram) are however licensed only to those with specified qualifications. The meaning of vraj-gatow which is - to go - is here intended to mean mental determination. This means that it is not necessary to physically be next to God and hold His feet. It is enough to set off with a constant idea of holding His feet. Even AchAryas are fond of this point of the present tense used in 'vrajAmi'. This point is also in accordance with "sakridEva prapannAya ". The first or one surrendering is done to fix the target for commitment. And because of the interest in or fondness for the prApya, further prapattis are repeated until reaching or attaining the goal (prapya). Just as mere taking the paddy or rice does not constitute a yAga or a sacrifice or even a small part of the sacrifice, so also accepting the feet as means for reaching the prApya, does not constitute the means. It is just a qualification for the surrendering incumbent.

tava -- "apyaham jlvitam jahyAm" and "kapOtO vAnara shrEShTha,. kim punar madvidhO jana:". I accept the feet of the God who declared toeing in line with the pigeon's episode which even at the cost of its own life protected its refugee.

Storam 3

ekastvamasi lOkasya sraShTA samhArakastathA |
adhyakShashcha anumantA cha guNamAyA samAvrita: ||

Recall:

The first slokam was concerned with the selection of the prApyam - the goal to be obtained. The second slokam is an explanation for the word 'namaste'. The need for the explanation arises for, though the word 'nama:' is common for other means also, as in 'madyAjl mAm namaskuru", here it is a synonym for 'sharaNa'. The going for 'sharaNam' that was advised in 'gachchadhvam Enam sharaNam sharaNyam puruSharShabhA:' was followed by namaskAram as in 'draupadyA sahitAs sarvE namashchakrur janArdanam' which proves that the word 'sharaNam' and 'namas' are synonymous.

Meaning:

lOkasya - of all the worlds

sraShTA - creator

tvam Eka: asi - You are the only one

tathA - likewise

samhAraka: - the annihilator (you alone)

adhyakSha: cha - patiently awaiting the time and opportunity for protecting

anumantA cha - Allowing a person who voluntarily involves himself in activities which lead to further imprisonment in the samsAra

guNamAyA samAvrita: - You are also curtained and made invisible by Prakruti which consists of three guNas called sattva, rajas and tamas.

Introduction:

Having mentioned the prApya and prApaka in the previous two verses, further slokams delineate the sharaNyatva (capability of providing refuge or surrenderability) as justification for accepting the upAya or the means in the previous slokam. This slokam, mentions the great qualities like omniscience etc connected with His being the origin of the universe. Just as "kAraNam tu dhyEya:" the origin is to be meditated upon, so also the origin is to be surrendered to. Because, after mentioning in "yO brahmaNam vidadhAti pUrvam yO vai vEdamscha prahiNOTi tasmai" about the origin of the universe, comes "mumukShur vai sharaNam aham prapadyE" in which the vEdas ordain prapatti at His feet as the first rung in the ladder of liberation process.

Commentary:

lOkasya sraShTA -- the creator of every object that is directly tangible and heard from the Sruthis.

tvam -- You. This singular is to eliminate specifically all other creators. As in "AkAshAd vAyu: vAyOr agni: agnEr Apa: adbhya: pruthivi" and in "brahma asrujat" Vedas ascribe creatorship to achetanas and chetanas how can we say that the Lord is the creator of all? For, the one who is embedded in all chetanas and achetanas is the true creator. Manu said " svAt sharIrAt sisrukShur vividhA: prajA:". ParAshara said "sa Eva srujyas sa cha sargakartA sa Eva pAtyatti cha pAlyatE cha... varadO varENya:". BrahmasUtra states "tad abhi dhyAnAd eva tu tallingAt sa:".

Eka -- The word 'Eka' implies that He does not need any help or helper for His activities. "EkAkI na ramEta" implies that the loss if any, is His. "bahusyAm prajAyEya" implies that the sole purpose and benefit and pride of possession are all His own. "EkamEvAdvitlyam" implies the non-expectancy of any assistance or

the absence of necessity for any co-executor. This aspect of unaidedness was stressed by NammazhvAr in "tani mAppugazhE enjAnrum". Thus, when He can create and do all these alone without anybody's request or pleas, there is no need to reiterate that He would provide protection without doubt when some appellate actually requests for protection.

In the charama slokam "sarvadharmAn parityajya mAmEkam.." the word Eka stresses the absence of need for any means, whereas, in this slokam the word Eka stresses His unaided and single-handed creatorship.

tathA samhAraka: -- Just as You well-wishingly go about Your activities of creation, so also You alone can well-wishingly go about the destruction activity. After all it is only with Your best intentions and in the interest of the one whom You destroy that when You provided the chethanas with body and organs in order to enable them to achieve their social desires (purushArtha) , when some chethanas employing this body get down to unsocial activities tormenting and harassing other beings transgressing their limits, and in so doing irredeemably push themselves to perdition, then You destroy those bad elements with absolutely good intentions in their interest. This aspect also emphasises His refuge-worthiness because He does not allow the bad element to push himself to eternal perdition at his own hands.

adhyakShashcha -- He awaits patiently for the occasion or the event when the main purpose or objective of His creation -- that of voluntary generation of ardent desire for MokSha in these chethanas-- comes about.

See "AL pArtthu uzhituvAy kanDukol" in TiruvandAdi. Using this body which was provided for the purpose of achieving the human desired needs, when the chetanas, not only get down to hunt for purushArthas, but in the process, subject themselves to the eternal cycle of creation and annihilation the Lord becomes disappointed in His expectations of the chetanas. See "vyasanEShu manuShyANAm bhrusham bhavati duhkita:". So being the Lord, it is easy to imagine His obliging reaction when someone pleads for protection or redemption.

anumantA cha --- when out of indulgence and craving for other objects (other than God) the chetanas engage themselves in ritual and non-ritual activities in order to possess and enjoy them, the Lord turns His eyes away and ignores without inhibiting the chetanas. Why? God thinks " At least to obtain those trivial purushArthas, the chetana approached Me for help! I am omnipotent ever. Let me wait for the right time and place for redeeming and protecting the chetanas". So affectionate being the God, is it necessary to describe how well-wishingly obliging He would be if the chetana were to turn to Him and plead for protection.

guNamAyA samAvruta: --- what is the reason for these chetanas to become outward-faced away from God? It is because of the Maya which is characterised by the three guNas. See "bhagavat svarUpa tirOdhaAna karIm". Since the Maya enshrouds this chetana it is equivalent to enshrouding Him from the chetana. If this chetana, which is His belonging, is a victim of the three guNas, and emotionally relents as in "poi ninra jnAnamum polla....", then He alone who is free from these guNas and omniscient, should take the chetana under His refuge. See "sattvAdayo na santIshe yatra cha prAkruTA guNA:".

When the first slokam is a summary for everything, this slokam is a detailing of 'vishva bhAvana'. The characteristic of God is being a support for the creation sustenance and annihilation and also being non-expectant of any assistance. This aspect is described in this slokam.

Stotram 4

samsAra sAgaram ghOram ananta kIEsha bhAjanam |
tvAmEva sharaNam prApya nistaranti manIShiNa: ||

Meaning:

manIShiNa: -- those who have conquered their mindstuff
tvAmeva -- You alone
sharaNam -- As the means
prApya -- having resorted to
anantha kIEsha bhAjanam -- birthplace of perennial adversities
ghOram -- very cruel and appalling
samsAra sAgaram -- this ocean of samsara
nistaranti -- do cross over

Intro:

Since the fore-mentioned virtue of God of being the originator of the universe is common to both *kAraNam tu dhyEya:* *yO brahmANam vidadhAti pUrvam* indicating the right person to be worshipped (upAsya) and *mumukShur vai sharaNam aham prapadye* indicating the surrender to the right person, is there any practical precedent to say that prapatti apart from being just an organ of upAsana (worship) is an independent and self-sufficient means of liberation? yes; there are a few persons who were subjected to creation, that pipelined their mind in the right path, who accepting only You as the sole means could cross the samsAra, according to this slokam. This clarifies that prapatti was not merely hypothetically declared in the pramANas as the best means but carries the conviction of being followed in practice by (religious) elites.

Introduction:

What is samsAra ? It is a complex of ignorance (avidya), deeds (karma), trace or residue (of previous desires) (vAsanA), taste (ruchi) and connection with nature (prakriti sambandham) and six emotional states (kAma krodha etc) or six deformations (garbha janma jarA etc). Even children, friends and spouses being the effects of these causes are also to be encompassed by the word samsAra. ** janma samsAra bandhanAt ...muchyatE** implies that birth etc fall under the class of effects and ignorance etc., fall under the class of causes. SamsAra is described as an ocean owing to several reasons. It has no beginning and no end. It has no spatial or temporal boundaries. It pulls deep into itself those that step into it. It can only be entered into, but once entered into, one cannot find a way out to the shore by oneself without special help.

Commentary:

ghOram -- It is appalling. That is, it is unlike hell and other places from which people can return with the knowledge of the sufferings inflicted there. On the other hand, like a sugar coated pill, though it is a cause of spiritual destruction of the soul, it is outwardly attractive to all on account of its trivial pleasures as cited in ** innamudenat tOnRi **. People in the samsAra, generally implement several means and methods to establish their egoism and to obtain desired objects of pleasure other than God (viShayAntara).

ananta kIEsha bhAjanam -- It is the reservoir of endless adversities caused by three types of suffering (tApatraya). There is no end to sufferings in this land in stark contrast to that special land of perennial beatitude cited in *nalam antamilladOr nAdu*.

tvAmeva sharaNam prApya -- The cruelty of the samsAra beset with inequalities was stated above. Now is revealed, the easy accessibility (sowlabhyam) of the means that can take us across this samsAra.

tvAm -- You who have the great qualities required of creatorship etc mentioned in the previous slokam.

Eva -- The emphasis implies that just as being single-handed and non-expectant of assistance in the process of creation, You, as a means, are non-expectant of any other co-means to be followed. You are absolutely self-sufficient as means too. In the Ahirbudhnya samhita which is supportive of this concept, the same non-expectancy of other co-means has been upheld as follows.

(aham asmyaparAdhAnAm AlayO akinchanO agati:
tvamEvopAya bhUtO mE bhavEti prArthanA mati:
sharaNAgatir ityuktA sA dEvE asmin prayujyatAm)

(i.e. I am a treasure house of crimes. I am insolvent and have no means. The prayerful thought that You alone must become my means, is defined as sharaNAgati or surrender. Let this be implemented before this God.)

Even the God who is a good refuge said "mAmEva yE prapadyantE...".

Even the service to AchArya is meant to understand the implications of this emphasis. The word 'sharaNam' in this sloka is used to preclude any upAsana or long worship. In the phrase 'vrajAmi sharaNam tava' of the second sloka, 'vrajAmi' has been substituted by 'prApya' in this sloka. It is done to signify that just as the attainment of the God is easy, so also even His form as the means is very easily accessible. After all, in *Arenakku nin pAdame sharaNAgat tandozhindAy* NammAzhwar pronounced the sanction of this means to him by God as a 'manna' from Him by His grace.

nistaranti -- They cross (this ocean) by Your aid.

manIShiNa: -- 'manO jEtAra: = manIShiNa:'. Those who have conquered and controlled their mind that chases and indulges in other (trivial) objects (viShayAntara pravaNam) and their mind that runs after and employs other means (sAdhanAntara pravaNam) for salvation. With the quotation "samsArArNava magnAnAm", another Scripture also explained this idea in detail.

samsArArNava magnAnAm viShayAkrAnta chEtasAm |
viShNupOtam vinA nAnyat kinchidasti parAyaNam ||

For the people who are drowned in the ocean of samsAra and whose minds are besieged by the objects of senses, there is no better means or resort to cross the ocean than the boat in the form of Lord ViShNu.

When the first slokam is overall summary, this slokam is concerned with the word 'namastE'. The second slokam describes the method of its implementation. And, in order to attract people to follow it ardently, this slokam exemplifies the great benefits attained by great religious masters.

Stotram 5

na tE rUpam na chAkArO nAyudhAni nachAspadam |
tathApi puruShAkArO bhaktAnAm tvam prakAshasE ||

Meaning:

rUpam-- (Your) divine spiritual I characteristics

tE-- for You

na-- not meant (implying that though basically independent it becomes dependent to Your refugees)

AkAra: cha -- Your divine and auspicious personality

tE na -- not for You

AyudhAni -- divine arsenals

tE na-- not for Your purpose

Aspadam cha-- Your divine abode Vaikuntham and other paraphernalia

tE na-- are not intended for You. (implying that all these are intended for Your subservients).

bhaktAnAm tvam -- You are the property of devotees

tathApi-- even though having all Your svarUpa rUpa guNa and vibhUti (characteristics, personality, quality and extensive wealth) at the behest of Your refugees

puruShAkAra: -- You shine brightly with the virtue of absolute greatness as described in the PuruShasUkta.

Introduction:

(na tE rUpam etc.) This slokam expresses that You make Yourself and Your possessions very favourable to those who will cross the samsAra by resorting only to You as the means as cited in " tvAmeva sharaNam prApya nistaranti ". The refugees write off (assign) themselves and their belongings to God by virtue of their spiritual characteristics (svarUpa). He, on the other hand, extends and lays out Himself and His belongings for them by virtue of His affection and good-nature etc (vAtsalya soughiilya etc). Therefore, this slokam is concerned with His vAtsalya, soughiilya etc. Besides, this indicates His favourability as a refuge. Because, vAtsalya, soughiilya (affection and good-naturedness) etc are also characteristics of a good refuge as much as svAmitva and soulabhya (masterhood and easy accessibility) etc as cited in "Ekastvamasi" earlier.

Commentary:

(na tE rUpam) "rUpam" indicates divine spiritual characteristics, because "AkAra" has been used next to indicate the divine personality. In what sense does this slokam deny the possession of svarUpa etc to God? Since svarUpa etc are denied for Him after using the word 'tE', what in fact is denied is the use of these for His personal advantage or benefit or purpose. Only the selfish end is denied here. Reading as "tE rUpam na tE" makes it clearer. Even Your divine spiritual characteristic is not for You. If at all, it serves for the protection of the refugees and is favourable to them, the svarUpam which is independent becomes dependent to them and abides by their wishes. Compare "mayi bhrutyE sthitE dEvAn AjnApayata kim nrupai:" and "kimkarau samupasthitau". One who was the controller of everyone and everything became the son of a nameless samsAri. This verily is the transfer of purpose of the svarUpam in favour of the refugees (Ashrita). This word "svarUpam" is also representative of His jnAna, shakti etc. For, refer to the slokams of Kurattalwan:-

* parijana paribarhA bhUShaNAnyAyudhAni ;
pravara guNagaNAshcha jnAnashaktyAdayastE;
paramapadam athAnDAnyAtmadEhastathAtmA;
varada sakalam Etat samshritArtham chakartha.*

Oh Varada, Your nityasUri attendants (ViShvaksEnar, AdishESha etc), paraphernalia (chhatram chAmaram etc), ornaments and weapons, great set of qualities, jnAna, shakti etc, paramapadam (vaikunTham), the universal galaxies, Your body and Your soul, all these in entirety You gave away for the benefit of refugees (AshritAs). As cited in "yassarvajnas sarvavit" He who is omniscient, became "avijnAtA" for the sake of His refugees; and, again after swearing not to lift any weapon, He forswore and lifting a weapon became asatyasankalpa (one of untrue oath).

*ananyAdhInatvam tava kila jagur vaidika gira ;
parAdhInam tvAm tu pranataparatantam manumahE;
upAlambhO ayam bhO: shrayati sArvajnyamapi tE ;
yatO dOSham bhaktEShviha varada naivAkalayasi ..*

In these words, Kurattalwan too stated the subordinateness of the Lord to the refugees and His utter ignorance of their offences and defects.

Even His divine personality is having a form favourable to the protection of the refugees. In Paramapadam, His personality is enjoyable for the nityasUris. When He comes to the vyUham, His form is enjoyable to the inhabitants of svEtadvIpa. His form is accessible for surrendering by the BrahmA and others. When He descends to the Earth, He makes His divine personality which is intangible to the senses, tangible to the senses for the sake of defence and deliverance of soft-hearted people, and by His grace lets a chosen few enjoy His visible form. This word "AkAra" extends even to the divine ornaments that adorn it. Kurattalwan verily said "bhUShaNAni AyudhAni". As said in "vastrANyAbharaNAni cha , tam vinA kaikayIputram bharatam dharma chAriNam" the clothes and ornaments are intended for the refugees.

"AyudhAni" -- the weapons in His arsenal, appear like 'weapons' for decimating the enemies to the enemies of the refugees, but shine like ornaments for those refugee devotees who are rid of sins and enjoy seeing God's form. Refer to the pAsurams "eppOdum kaikazhalA nEmiyAn nammEl vinai kativAn" and "kUrArAzhi veNshangEndi kodiEn pAl vArAy" and "shangennum chakkaramennum tuzhAyennum" which reflect the same purport. It is also implied to extend upto the attendants and the paraphernalia. 'parijana' or attendants, as in "yatra pUrvE sAdhyAs santi dEvA:" "adiyArgaL kuzhAngaLai kUduvadenru kolO? ", are the aspired destination for the refugees. Even though the "parichchadas" (paraphernalia) also are one among the nityasuris, they are in the form suitable to be employed by the other nityasuris in the service of the Lord (like chhatram chAmaram etc).

(na chAspadam) paramapadam , vyUham vibhavam and other bhOgasthAnams are not only places of enjoyment for the Lord Himself but also established and intended for the enjoyment of the respective refugees in the different places by displaying Himself in the respective places for the benefit of the respective inhabitants.

"tathApi puruShAkAra:" In spite of all these condescensions, You are always integrated with Your property of puruShatva. As described in PuruSha sUktam in "puruSha EvEdagm sarvam" and "sahasrashIrSha puruSha:", one who is always above all, (bhaktAnAm tvam) shines by being subordinate to the devotees to prove that He is "subservient to the refugees". The fact that the devotees have offered themselves totally to You, is by virtue of appropriateness for their svarUpam. But Your placing Yourself at their disposal is by virtue of the desire of the Ashritas. This idea was explained by Kurattalwan in "samshritArtham chakartha" quoted earlier.

"prakAshasE" -shine forth -; if a doubt arises about the inappropriateness of this paradoxical subservience of the independent Lord, the Itihasa and PurANas say that He shines forth by being subservient to the devotees in slokams like " yadvinA bharatam tvAm cha shatrughnam chApi mAnada; bhavEnmama sukham kinchit bhasmasAtkurutAm shikhl" -- whatever happiness comes without and in the absence of bharata, you and shatrughna, let fire consume that happiness into ashes. "nisruShTAtmA suhritsu cha " etc . His glory is being easily accessible to the devotees and behaving subservient to them.

If the first shlokam is the summary, then this shlokam is the meaning of "hrishIkEsha". He pulls back the devotees from inappropriate 'vishayAntaras' and makes Himself their object of attraction. Training them from aprApta vishayas and diverting them towards right goal is verily the work of the master.

Stotram 6

naiva kimchit parOkSham tE pratyakShO(a)si na kasyachit |
naiva kimchidasiddham tE na cha siddhO(a)si kasyachit ||

Meaning:

tE-- for You
parOkSham-- beyond the scope of Your sight
na kimchit-- not anything (is)
kasyachit-- To anybody
pratyakSha:-- visible to the eyes
na asi-- You are not
tE-- To You
asiddham-- impossible
na kimchit-- nothing (is)
kasyachit-- For anybody
siddha:-- attainable
na asi-- You are not

Introduction:

(naiva kimchit etc) . Even if according to "Ekastvamasi" He has Overlordship and accessibility conducive to creatorship of the universe, and even if according to the previous shloka, He possesses vAtsalya (affection to 'calf') and saushIlya (good-naturedness) as evidenced by His placing Himself and His assets at the disposal of the refugees, He would not be a suitable refuge if He lacked jnAna and shakti etc. Hence, this shloka deals with His jnAnam and shakti. The qualities expressed in the previous verses validate Him only as a fit ground as an object of adoration; but for success in getting the desired fruits, jnAna and shakti, verily become necessary.

Commentary:

(naiva kimchit parOkSham tE) there is nothing that is beyond the gamut of Your vision. As in "yassarvajnas sarvavit" and "svAbhAvikI jnana bala kriyA cha" He is omniscient and His knowledge is intrinsic. As in "yO vEtti yugapat sarvam pratyakShENa sadA svata:", He is informed of everything directly before His eyes, simultaneously and by Himself without the help of any media. For such a God, is it necessary, on my part to prayerfully report with my mouth explicitly, the real nature of my spiritual characteristic, the nature of the goal appropriate to my spiritual characteristic, that the impediment to reach the goal is my involvement with the prakriti or Nature, that there is not a category of hell to which I was not admitted owing to my merger with Prakriti, and that there is not a category of womb that I have not entered into? Besides, after all what I can say is woefully constrained by my limited knowledge. Is there anybody else other than You, that is habituated to my long history of sinful omissions and commissions in the flood of time beginning with the creation, that is fully familiar with me? besides, is there any one else knowing about me that knows how to report in the proper method? Just as I am not knowledgeable about these things, so also, there is nothing that You are unaware of.

(kasyachit na pratyakShO(a)si). As in "na sandrishE tiSThati rUpamasya na chakShuShA pashyati kashchana Enam" You are not visible to anybody. In several ways, the shruti too establishes your imperceptible nature. Such being You, You become visible when You appear on the spot and show Yourself as when You intervened to defend that elephant or as when You incarnate and show Yourself. Even that Azhvar who was graced with good knowledge uprooting ignorance, who said "vAshattadam pOI varuvAnE oru nAL

kANa vArAyE", did only desire to see Him; he did not put any effort to see Him. Even ALavandAr exclaimed "kadA nu sAkShAt karavANi chakShuShA".

(tE asiddham na kimchidEva) As in "parA(a)sya shaktir vividhaiva shrUyatE" for You the omnipotent God, in the aspect of protecting the refugees, is there something for You that cannot be done or that is unprecedented that You would want to throw your spanner in despair? Just by mental decision anything and everything gets done. As in " sanjIvayan api mritam sutam uttarAyA:, sAndIpInEshchiramritam sutamAnayamshcha, dhAmnO nijAt dvijasutAn punarAnayanvA, svAm Eva tAm tanumahO kathamAnayastvam ? " You who can materialize and realize so many unprecedented events, can easily disband my status of nityasamsAri and recruit me among the nityasUris!

(kasyachit na siddhO(a)si) You are not attainable or accessible to anybody by his own efforts. Even if one is 'kritakritya' and has done everything that is specified to be done to attain You, he has to wait as in "nayAmi paramAm gatim" in expectation of the ultimate step to be taken by You. Thus the jnAna and shakti that can lead to my liberation are with You only! All others except You are absolutely ignorant and impotent. You alone have the eyes and legs. All others except You are absolutely blind and lame. What then is the purpose and capability of jnAna and shakti of a chetana? initially, his jnAna serves in upAyasvIkAram or acceptance of means, and shakti is harnessed in the daily reiteration of the acceptance in doing His service to the lord. These jnAna and shakti are both used in bhogam or enjoyment also. This means to say that, -- just by the upAyasvIkAram of the chetana, taking his word for it, if You, based on the longstanding relationship with the chetana, do not protect him, then it will be a slur on Your fair name. In the duty of deliverance and protection, the jnAna and shakti of God are the sustaining principles. Jeeyar used to point out by his grace, " Not the attainment of Ishvara to Atma; but the attainment of Atma to Ishvara, is but the actual meaning of recall "ninaivu"! That is, it is more a lord's pleasure to gain an Atma or chetana, than vice versa. The shruti, "ahamannam" supports the same meaning. As in the shruti, "annAda:", the enjoyership of the chetana is limited to accepting as his purushArtha or fruition of desire, on seeing the pleasure on the face of the Lord on obtaining him (chetana jeevatma) after a long time.

If the first shloka is the summary, then this shloka is the meaning of the word "jitante" in detail.

Stotram 7

kAryANAm kAraNam pUrvam vachasAm vAchyamuttamam |
yOgAnAm paramAm siddhim paramam tE padam vidu: ||

Meaning:

kAryANAm -- for all the things that are the effects
pUrvam kAraNam-- as the original cause
vachasAm-- for all the spoken words
uttamam vAchyam-- as the ultimate target or the best implication
yOgAnAm-- for all the yOgas
paramAm siddhim-- as the supreme goal
tE-- Your
paramam padam-- divine feet
vidu: -- (the elders) understood

Stotram 7

(kAryANAm kAraNam etc) Having recalled the jnAna and shakti mentioned in the previous shloka, this shloka says that I should be admitted into paramapadam which is created by His shakti and which is favourable for enjoyment of God, . Sri Bhattar used to interpret that He is a fit refuge who can bestow the land that is accessible to the muktas or the liberated. The other scholars used to opine that this shloka says that one should attain the divine feet of God.

Commentary:

(kAryANAm kAraNam purvam) This excludes the mutual cause and effect relationships. As in "pradhAna pumsOrajayO: kAraNam kAryabhUtayO:" even the prakriti and puruSha, in relation to the God, become His effects only. As in "yata: prasUtA jagata: prasUti toyEna jIvAn visasarja bhUmyAm", the secondary causes prakriti and puruSha in turn caused 'mahat' 'ahankAra' etc. From them followed the 'anDams' or the galaxies. From the brahma who resides in that 'anDam' as the cause, came the four types of creatures like devas etc, and their enjoyables, enjoying implements and the enjoying places (bhogya bhogopakaraNa bhogasthAna). Thus, for all the multitude of secondary and tertiary causes, the sarveshvara stands as the primary cause.

(kAryANAm kAraNam) when this is interpreted to mean a special place (paramapadam) instead of feet, then just as prakriti is an eternal qualification for the God, and therefore it was named as the cause of the universe, so also, paramapadam being His eternal qualification, and existing earlier, can be indicated as the primary cause. This states the eternality of the paramapadam. This is seen from quotations like "tadakShaE paramE vyOman" and "kalangAp peru naharam".

(vachasAm vAchyam uttamam) For all the words that are laukikam (worldly) and vaidikam (religious and ritualistic) the prime indication is the God. Consider quotations like "anEna jIvEnAtmanA anupravishya nAmarUpE vyAkaravANI", "tatsrushTvA tadEvAnuprAvishat", "satyanchAnritancha satyamabhavat" for supporting this. The brahmasUtram "charAchara vyapAshrayastu syAttadvapadEshO bhAKta: tadbhAva bhAvitvAt" also says that God alone is the primary indication of all words. Therefore, among the created things, including the various worshipping gods, including the worshipper human beings and including all the fauna and flora (tiryak sthAvara) which are the worshipping implements, the God resides as the in-dwelling divine soul.

When (vachasAm vAchyamuttamam) is taken to point to a place, then it indicates the greatness and primordealness of the paramapadam as seen in "paramE vyOman" and "tani yulaku".

(yogAnam paramAm siddhim) Yogas like jnAnayoga bhaktiyoga etc are also employed as means for liberation. It is distinct from the "liberation from samsara" which is bestowed by the grace of the Lord Himself as seen in "tvAmEva sharaNam prApya nistaranti manIShiNa:". This points to the divine feet which are unlimitedly enjoyable. Besides, the place is also unlimitedly enjoyable as in "nam antamilladOr nAdu".

(tE paramam padam) The feet and/or the abode of incomparable enjoyability (niratishaya bhogyam) of that Lord who is the cause of all, who is indicated by all words, and who is attainable by all the means is meant by the word "paramam padam".

(vidu:) people who excelled in knowledge, have understood so. Those who have understood that there exists a land which is eternal, superior to prakriti, and is excessively enjoyable, and that in that land, as in "shriyA sArdham jagatpati: ...AstE", He resides with an excellent, magnificent, special form, are really knowers of everything that is to be known, and have verily grasped, as a fruit on hand, the summary purport of all vedantas. Seeing the smallness of an aspirant and His own autocracy (svAtantryam), He bestows without being asked for, the specialties of this world in order to allow him to go there (paramapadam) after knowing his intentions. As an example, if one has a lemon in his hand and another extols the virtues of that lemon, then the first one, if he were liberal, would give away that lemon to the other, knowing his intentions.

If the first slokam is the summary, then this slokam is the description of the word "mahApuruSha".

Stotram 8

aham bhItO (a)smi dEvEsha samsArE (a)smin bhayAvahE |
pAhi mAm punDarIkAkSha na jAnE sharaNam param ||

Meaning:

dEvEsha-- Oh head of nithyasUris
bhayAvahE-- in this frightening
asmin samsArE-- in this samsAra
aham-- adiyEn
bhItO(a)smi-- am terrified
punDarIkAkSha-- red-lotus-eyed lord!
mAm-- me
pAhi-- please protect
param sharaNam-- other means
na jAnE-- I do not know

Introduction:

(aham bhItOsmi..) In the previous shloka, the chetana, reiterated the enjoyability in the paramapadam. And because of that reiteration, the fear of his incompatibility with this samsAra arose in his mind. This shloka implores the lord to eliminate that fear. After all, one who can remove the fear of samsAra, is verily eligible as a refuge. Even for a person who has comprehended the samsara inside out, this samsAra is a source of terror. And even for one who has understood one's svarUpa (characteristic) inside out, this samsAra is a source of fear. Besides, even on reiterating the enjoyability of paramapadam, this samsAra is a source of fear.

Commentary:

(bhayAvahe asmin samsAre aham) what is samsAra? why is it terrifying? The answer is samsAra is but a conglomerate of ignorance (avidya), actions (karma) trace memory (vasana), taste (for indulgence) (ruchi), and bondage to nature (prakriti sambandham). Ignorance is misunderstanding. i.e., the feeling of "I"ness in the body that I have entered into, and the feeling of "mine"ness in the objects encountered by the body as in "anAtmani AtmabuddhiryA asvE svamiti yA mati:" quoted by sage Parashara.

Nammalvar said to himself "yAne ennai ariyagilAdE yAnE entanadE enrirundEn" and advised others "nIr numadenrum ivai" . Since ahankAram (egoism) smothers servitude (shEshatvam), it is a source of fear. mamatA (possessiveness) smothers a sense of enjoyability in matters of the God and hence is also a source of fear.

Karma has two forms of punya and pApa (merits and sins). Sins lead to suffering in hells and hence are terrifying. But how is merit terrifying? Merits result in enjoyments in heavens etc. Since they nurture ahankAra and mamakAra (egoism and possessiveness) which destroy the characteristic of the soul (svarUpa), they are frightening. Since they encourage one to indulge in sense objects like (music) sound sight etc they are frightening. The bondage with the body, is terrifying owing to the mental and physical afflictions, insults and victimisations by others and uncomfortable weathers.

In the same vein, even traces and tastes are frightening. Why? The first Bharata (jada bharata), owing to great interest in the fawn at the stage of samAdhi (last stage of yoga), was reborn as a deer. Not that he had love for a wrong object that gave him rebirth as a deer; it was the strong trace (vAsana) of memory

as the protector of the fawn, that resulted in the rebirth. Hence, even traces and interests are dangerous. Just like 'drishti viSham' (seeing itself is poisonous), ruchi or interest is poisonous and dangerous. That is, for the samsAris, seeing itself is dangerous, just as for a moth which by its ego, seeing a flame and taking it as light, voluntarily falls into it and burns itself. "bhUmau nipAtyamAno(a)drE: antarAstE svapanniva" just like a man on a long fall from a mountain onto the ground, falls asleep on the way oblivious or unaware of the impending crash. Similarly the people of samsAra please themselves with pleasures not bothering about the impending calamity. Just as in "nalam antamilladOr nAdu", an entire vibhUti, vaikuntham, is a total happiness, this samsAra is fully submitted to fearsome nature.

(aham bhItO(a)smi) having realised the samsAra as a reservoir of endless adversities, I am consumed by fear. The use of present tense (asmi) implies that I do not see a way out to eliminate the fear. Is there an opportunity for the removal of fear? yes, one who has transferred his onus of self-defence to God, would be fearless. But even that transfer of onus will not make me fearless. Because of excessive adoration for the goal (prApya), if impatience and haste to reach Him are born, one cannot contain himself and remain unagitated just with the thought of having transferred the onus of protection to Him. In spite of having full faith in Him, as declared in "kaLaikaN maRRilEn" and "nAgaNai mishai nam pirAn sharaNE sharaN namakku", Alvar, realising the enjoyability of that promised special land as stated in "anthamil pErinbatthu adiyarOdu irundamai", goes ahead later to yell and scream as in "muniyE nAnmuganE" for immediate release.

(dEvEsha) As in "ayarvaRum amararhaL" when You and the nityasUris are enjoying in isolation in paramapadam, how can You be indifferent to me who is suffering here but nevertheless equally deserving as the nityasUris to enjoy Your company? Even mother goddess (pirAtti), staying as She did in the terrifying Lanka, groaned "hA rAma! hA lakshmaNa!" as did Alvar in "imaiyOr talaivA" and "viNNuLAr perumAnEyo"!

(mAm pAhi) Save me, who having realised the enjoyability in paramapadam as in "yOgAnAm paramAm siddhim" is hastening for liberation. As in "Ehi pashya sharIrANi" (sages to Rama in Aranyakandam) he displays the marks of suffering on his body.

(pAhi) having severed my connection with the body You would take me in the path of archirAdi to that land free from fear.

(pundarikAkSha) please, look at me with your attractive eyes and cool me down. There will be great difficulty when I put a lot of effort to remove my own fears. If You wish to remove my fears, it will be a very easy job, alas. Do You need those qualities of vAtsalya etc (making You a good refuge) and jIvAna shakti etc (necessary for the attainment of the fruit) to save me? Just as, in the first step, You removed my external distraction to other objects as stated in "jitante pundarikAkSha", pray remove my fears and save me.

(na jAnE sharaNam param) I am not aware of any refuge except You. Even though the srutis commanded "nididhyAsitavya:" and You, the saviour also proclaimed "manmanA bhava madbhakta:", I am totally unaware of any other means. What is the reason behind it? Because, including the chetana or jIvAtma and including his assistant sense organs, all are totally subordinate to You as explained in "namastE(a)stu" and "hriShIkEsha". Even God proclaimed "matta: smritir jnAnam apohanam", i.e., remembrance, knowledge and forgetting are all caused by Me!

When the first shloka is the summary, this shloka is the elucidation of the word "pundarikAkSha".

Sri:
Srimathe Ramanujaya Nama:

Jitante Stotram

Stotram 9

kAlEShvapi cha sarvEShu dikShu sarvAsu chAchyuta |
sharlRE cha gatau chApi vartatE mE mahadbhayam ||

Meaning:

achyuta-- one who does not let his devotees slip off
sarvEShu kAlEShu api cha-- in all auspicious times too
sarvAsu dikShu cha-- in the auspicious places in all directions
sharlRE cha-- in this body too (that is a tool for doing dharma)
gatau api cha-- in the migration into other bodies too
mE-- for me
mahat bhayam-- great fear
vartatE-- there is

Introduction:

(kAlEShvapi cha etc.) God says "can you say 'I have no other go'; after having provided various means, through scriptural procedures, of uplifting the soul, on top of that, have We not provided you with various auspicious times and auspicious places for eliminating all sins by simple actions? can you say that you are not aware of any other means? ". In answer, man says " I am not denying the existence of other means. But I being an eternal samsAri, my initial status also goes from worse to worse, if I keep employing various other means ".

From this, it is understood, that the adoption of the ready means (god) (siddhOpAya parigraham) is imperatively preceded by the renouncement of all other means (upAyAntara parityAga pUrvakam Ayirukkum). One Who is thus a stand-alone and self-sufficient means, alone can verily, become a refuge-provider (sharanyan AvAn).

Commentary:

(kAlEShvapi cha) in the meritorious summer and winter solstices (dakshinAyana and uttarAyana) and vernal and autumnal equinoxes (mESha viShu and tulA viShu punyakAlams) and exceptionally meritorious ardhOdaya and other punyakAlams etc. That is, great sin-eliminating powers have been attached to sethu visit and bathing and gifts at sangamas (confluences) in these punyakAlams. As said in "kritaghnOpi vishuddhyati" and "gOghnE chaiva surApE cha chorE bhagnavratE tathA. niShkritir vihitA sadbhi: kritaghnE nAsti niShkriti: ", even the sin of an ungrateful person which has no prescribed atonement, will be removed by good deeds in such auspicious times.

(sarvEShvapi) "ashvattham sindhurAjam cha sadA sEvEta na sprishEt. mandavArE sprishEt pUrvam aparam parvaNi sprishEt" thus having no prohibitions like not touching the sea in non-parva times (amAvasya and pUrnimA= parva), it includes all tIrthams like Ganga etc which have no time bars for visiting and touching.

(dikShu) apart from the above, as in "dEshoyam sarva kAmadhuk" sacred places that are sanctifying initially, then becoming instrumental for attaining God and then also becoming enjoyable like punya deshams etc are all clubbed under this. Verily it is said "mathurA nAma nagarI punyA pApaharI shubhA".

(sarvAsu cha) By this are indicated all places other than those where the God incarnated at one time or the other, like sAlagrAma mandala etc, where God is invariably ever present.

(sharIra cha) The body that was provided to me as in "sharIram Adyam khalu dharma sAdhanam" and "vichitra dEhasampatti: IshvarAya nivEditum" for exercising the various means (upAya anuShThAnam) in the above mentioned places, has in my case become futile for me.

(gatau cha) As in "svadharmE nidhanam shrEya: paradharmO bhayAvaha:" while exercising the sAdhanas or implements of the various means, if death occurs, then one gets another embodiment but even that migration to another body is futile for me by not yielding the aspired fruit. (gatau) in the migration to another body. (api) this word could imply other exercisable means like karma jnAna and bhakti; it could also imply the collective migrated bodies of the previous births. Just like so many of my previous embodiments went waste, so also the present body also is a waste.

(mE mahad bhayam) not only that they went futile, but also fear exists in me regarding the exercisable upAyas like karmayoga etc., that are available in each embodiment. But why should fear exist? Because, having earlier accepted Your feet only as the means, and now deviating to exercise other means, I stand to lose even Your compassion and sympathy and thus those other means that are beckoning me are terrifying to me. But why should a compatible means cause fear? Because, the first accepted or adopted means does not endure other means. As in "tvAmEva sharanam prApya" I had adopted only You as the means, verily. BhagavadGeeta also said "tamEva sharaNam gachcha". Even the refuge-provider (sharanya) said "mAmEkam sharaNam vraja".

(mahad bhayam vartatE) This fear is not of comparable measure as the lesser fear of samsAra mentioned in the previous shloka. It is inferred that the fear arising out of indulging in other objects or subjects is not as great as the fear arising out of indulging in or exercising other means or implements. (vishayAntara prAvANyattAI vanda bhayattaLavanrira sAdhanAntara prAvANyattAI vanda bhayam!) For, for atoning the sin and removing the fear arising from indulgence in other objects of human aspiration, one can count on the pity and grace of God. But the sin of adopting other means or tools, alienates us even from that grace or pity!

(achyuta) But alas, Your name "achyuta" arose because of Your nature of not leaving in the lurch, even those that have alienated from Your grace and thus have lost all means of redemption. "yasmAt prAptA: na chyavantE sa: achyuta:" is verily the interpretation for "achyuta". He is achyuta from Whom those who surrender are not dropped out. Afterall, thou art one that did not ditch that woman in such circumstances, who yelling "dvArakAnilaya achyuta" threw both her hands off in resignation! Arjuna once told "tvat prasAdAt mayA achyuta" !

If the first shloka is a summary, this shloka serves the word "namastE" as even that surrender is done after abandoning all other means.

Stotram 10

tvatpAda kamalAd anyan na mE janmAntarEShvapi |
nimittam kushalasyAsti yEna gachchAmi sadgatim ||

Meaning:

yEna --By which (means)
sadgatim -- good goal
gachchAmi-- I would attain
tasya kushalasya-- for such means
nimittam-- causative initial good deed
tvat pAdakamalAt anyat-- other than thine lotus feet
mE-- for me
janmAntarEShu api na asti-- is not there in any birth including present and future

Introduction:

(tvatpadakamalat etc) God says " Even though I am both the means and goal, the samsAri has been facing away from me and attaching himself to sense objects from times sans a beginning. If love for Me, preceded by dislike for sense objects have to be born in him, is'nt it necessary that he have some initial good deed in his account? Is'nt it that once the adoration to me is born in him due to some initial good deed, only then true knowledge will be born in him? Is'nt it that from that true knowledge, discrimination of acceptable and eschewable things is born in him? Is'nt it that then only the means for the attainment of the goal preceded by avoidance of eschewable things becomes desirable to him? Is'nt it thence that the attainment of the goal arises? is'nt it necessary that the initial good deed that is the root cause of all these must be done by him? ". In answer man says " that initial good deed is Your feet alone; I have no other go". This shloka reiterates the previous idea that both the means and the goal are He Himself. The means and the goal have been identified in the shlokams "tava charaNa dvandvam vrajAmi" and "yOGAnAm paramAm siddhim paramam te padam vidu:".

Commentary:

(tvat pAda kamalAt anyat kushalasya nimittam me nAsti) For me, just as You alone are the goal as well as the means to attain it, so also even the initial good deed for deserving it, is none other than Your feet alone. When it was enough to say "tvat anyat kushalasya nimittam me nAsti" (there is none other than You as the prerequisite good deed for deserving You as the means) why use "pAda kamalam"? For, these two words remind one of the goal and the means. The word "kamala" reminds of the enjoyability of the goal whereas the word "pAda" reminds of the means. In the verse "charana dvandvam sharaNam vrajAmi" the feet have been identified as the means.

(kushalasya nimittam) the initial good deed for obtaining the auspicious means for attaining the goal. But, as stated in "bahUnAm janmanAm ante jnAnavAn mAm prapadyate", the initial good deed is the knowledge of God, being a result of good deeds of many births and finally leading to the acceptance of the means. So how can we say as in "tvat pAda kamalAdanyat nAsti" that there is no other initial good deed than Your own feet? Well, (mE nAsti) even though I am ignorant, there is no go other than Your feet. Why? Well, what is the effect of good deed? it is to steer and revert one's soul, away from indulgence in pleasures of sound etc and arousing love for God. And when that is done as explained in "jitante pundarikAkSha" by the beauty of the Lord, the initial good deed is also His feet alone, as far as I am concerned.

(janmAntarEShvapi) What if, if one argues that even the reverting of a soul by displaying God's beauty could be the consequence of some special good deed done in some birth? Well, to revert a person who indulges deeply in sense objects, there is no expectation of a good deed and so there is no need for some good deed in some birth also. This concept is verily the base for Alvar gracefully saying "en Aviyai naduve vanduyyak koLginra nAthanai"

(yEna kushalEna sadgatim gachchAmi) sadgati means a very great unique goal. That is, as in "yogAnAm paramAm siddhim paramam te padam vidu:" the paramapadam. Hence the connection is "yena kushalena sadgatim gachchAmi, tasya kushalasya nimittam janmAntareShvapi tvat pAda kamalAt anyat mE nAsti". That cause, which would provide the means by which, I would attain good goal, is none other than Your lotus feet, for me, even in other births. In another interpretation, "yena upAyena sadgatim gachchAmi, tasya sadgati rUpasya kushalasya hetu bhUtam, upAyam, janmAntareShvapi, tvat pAdakamalAdanyat mE nAsti" meaning, by which means I would attain good goal-- for that welfare in the form of sadgati, the causative means, even in other births, there is none other than Your lotus feet, for me.

If the first shloka is a summary, this verse explains, the word pUrvaja.

Stotram 11

vijnAnam yadidam prAptam yadidam sthAnam Arjitam |
janmAntarE(a)pi mE dEva! mA bhUt tasya parikShaya: ||

Meaning:

dEva-- My lord!
mE-- for me
yat idam vijnAnam-- whatever knowledge (that You alone are the means and the goal)
prAptam-- has been obtained
yat idam sthAnam-- whatever status (regarding practical adherence to that knowledge)
Arjitam-- has been earned by me
tasya-- for them
parikShaya-- loss or reduction
janmAntarE api-- even in any other birth
mA bhUt-- let not happen

Introduction:

(vijnAnam etc) God says " Granted that We alone are the means and the goal, and the sukritam or the good deed that is the basis for getting them (prapya prapakangal), We being the means, what should We do next?". The man says,"Well, if the knowledge that is obtained and the firm adherence to that knowledge, remain with me without depreciation, then I do neither aspire even to go to that paramapadam described in *yOgAnAm paramAm siddhim paramam tE padam vidu:* nor do I pray for retirement from this dreadful samsAra. That wish alone is adequate for all times.

Commentary:

(vijnAnam) Distinguished knowledge. The knowledge that is born regarding the greatest goal and greatest means. After all, among the goals, there is nothing superior to attaining the god. Similarly, among all the means, there is nothing that is superior to that ready means or the siddhopAyam.

(yadidam jnAnam) This knowledge that is authenticated by the scriptures and dwelling in the lotus of the heart. It is reputed in the Vedantas that the goal and the means are both the Lord alone. In *Anandamaya:* *rasO vai sa:* *sarvagandhas sarvarasa:* He is reputed as the Goal. Starting with *yO brahmANam vidadhAti pUrvam* and till *mumukShurvai sharaNam aham prapadyE* and *tasmAnnyAsamEShAm tapasAmatiriktam Ahu:* and *EShahyEvAnanda yAti* He is reputed as the means.

(prAptam) Including even the class of people aspiring for benefits other than God (prayOjanAntaraparar) and the class of people who are adherants of other means (sAdhanAntaraniShThar), jnAna was provided by You for all types of candidates.

(yadidam sthAnamArjitam) position means the status which means the practical adherence to that jnAna. yadidam indicates that it is famous in a different place and it is resident in the heart. It is said **vyavasAyAt rutE brahman nAsAdayati tatparam** (Bharatam shAnti parvam). Even AzhvAr said *nAgaNai mishai nambirAn sharaNE sharaN namakkenru* .

(Arjitam) The word prAptam is used with jnAnam since it is obtained by the grace of God. But the word Arjitam goes with sthAnam or adhyavasAyam or adherence here because adherence is something that

can be obtained as a puruShArtha by candidates who have special eligibility and that too by soliciting the Lord. That is why adhyavasAyam has been said to have been Arjitam or earned by one's effort.

(janmAntarE(a)pi) Even if this birth (life) comes to an end, the knowledge and adherence should not get lost. If one asks "we are not aware of anybody that would have this aspiration as puruShArtha. is'nt it?". Well, then (mE) for me it is definitely a puruShArtha. Afterall, what a puruSha aspires for is verily defined as puruShArtha. Then God says "In spite of solicitors being there for this puruShArtha, it is not some thing We would like to give as one". Well, (dEva) You must not treat me as other samsAris, rollicking in this world. Afterall, they are subjects for Your enjoyment of divine sport (lila rasam).

(tasya) its. Since jnAna and adhyavasAyam are unanimous, singular "tasya" is used to denote both.

(parikShayO mA bhUt) The depreciation for jnAnam is forgetting. The depreciation for adhyavasAyam is loss. This means that one requests that there should be no forgetting and loss for jnAna and faith. Notwithstanding, praying in the earlier shloka to take one to paramapadam, and soliciting to relieve one of the connection with this dreadful samsAra, how could one be satisfied with just jnAna and adhyavasAyam explained above? Well that is because this jnAna and adhyavasAyam or adherence per se are so sweet and thrill us. Afterall, it was simply the gratitude to (Namm)AzhvAr for his gracious help, that made Madhurakavi say "tEvu maRRaRiyEn". In comparison with samsAris, the jnAna and adhyavasAyam per se are verily like the destination of the liberated souls. This concept was verily the inspiration for AzhvAr to write "mElAl pirappinmai peRRu adikkILk kuRREvalanRu maRappinmai yAn vEnDum mADu" in periyA tiruvandAdi-58. If the first shloka is the gist then this stands to remind one of the word "namastE".

Stotram 12

durgatAvapi jAtAyAm tvadgato mE manoratha: |
yadi nAsham na vindEta tAvatA(a)smi kritI sadA ||

Meaning:

tvad gata:-- firmly attached to You

mE-- my

manOratha:-- aspiration

durgatau jAtAyAm api-- even when born in a woeful bad low category of life or even in the worst circumstances

nAsham na vindEta yadi-- if it does not get destroyed

tAvatA-- by this much

sadA-- for ever

kritI asmi-- I am satisfied

Introduction:

(durgatAvapi etc) God asks "neither retirement from this sorrowful samsAra is wanted nor the attainment of that land which is full of happiness is wanted. Will it be a sufficient puruSAhArtha if there is merely that eligibility criterion of jnAna and adherence to Him as the means and goal (see shloka 11.). Besides, as in "janmAntarE(a)pi", is it not contra-indication to the soul, to sanction more births which prevent early reunion with god". Then I say, "Well, do not sanction anything asked for in the earlier shlokams. Even if I remain as a samsAri, and more over, get entangled in most unenviable circumstances, and again not materealising the cherished jnAna (regarding Your divine feet) and adherence to it, my aspiration remains only a dream, still I consider myself as satisfied as one who has done his duty and is in self control.

Commenatry:

(durgatAvapi jAtAyAm) What is durgati? -- it is a state in which all organs except the mind are uncooperative in the body. That is -- owing to debility, as in "aiyyAr kanThamadaikkilum" (TiruVaiMozhi-2-9-3), in the state of soul exiting from the body, in the dream state when all the external organs are senseless due to sleep, etc. In any of these states of debility.

(tvadgata:) my aspirations involved in the feet of Yours who is saturated with svarUpa rUpa guna and vibhUti.

(mE manoratha:) the aspirations of mine who am unable to wiggle physically out of my indulgence in mundane desires and work for attaining the goal.

What is manOratha? It means the action of keeping thinking about an object of desire or puruShArtham even if that did not materialize, out of deep attachment to that object.

If one asks, "if an aspiration does not materialize, can the action of just thinking about it be a source of solace? can the thinking of unfulfilled aspiration itself be a source of pleasure?", Well, a person, who enjoyed for a long time in the company of Urvashi, and later lost her company owing to the exhaustion of his punya (punya kshayam), even if provided with other sources of pleasure, his mind will not cherish them and will find comfort in merely thinking about her only and consider it as his purushArtham. The same applies here too.

It is rather sweeter to merely nurture (unfulfilled) aspirations of higher distinguished objects than to physically enjoy trivial objects.

What is the nature of aspirations in respect of god? Well, as in "pitA tvam mAtA tvam...", desiring that He alone should be all types of relations to me, as in "uNNum shORu paRugu nlr tinnumveRRilaiyumellAm" He alone should be all sustenance, nourishment and enjoyment for me, and desiring that the means for obtaining Him should be He alone.

(yadi nAsham na vindEta) If this aspiration does not suffer a discontinuity owing to distraction by other sense objects. "yadi" is used here because it is so impossible and rare to come by an unbroken continuity in the aspiration in respect of god in this samsAra where trivial sense objects are beckoning all and ruling the roost. The inference here is that, just like the obtainment of happiness by reaching a special land (vaikuntham), or like the elimination of sorrow of this samsAra, or like the obtainment of the jnAna, even the instilling of this aspiration in respect of god is totally dependent on the grace and mercy of the lord.

(tAvatA(a)smi kritI sadA) I consider my duties discharged for all time to come, just by harbouring such aspiration with respect to god. Irrespective of whether one is in a state of sound health or in a state of diseased body, whether one is sitting or sleeping or standing anywhere, or in various different births, I am satisfied fully by merely harbouring such an aspiration as much as by attaining the goal itself (prApyasiddhiyiRpOIE). This is reflected in the nAradIya sUkta vachanam...

****AsInA vA shayAnA vA tiShThanto yatra kutra vA.
namo nArAyaNAyEti mantraika sharaNA vayam****

Meaning: Whether sitting or sleeping or standing anywhere, we always adopt the mantra called "namo narAyaNAya" as the only resort.

In the previous shloka, as much sweet as attaining the God tastes, even so much sweet does merely having the jnAna also tastes. In this shloka, that concept is pushed to the boundary of sweetness by saying that even having that jnAna is not necessary ; it is adequate if merely the (unfulfilled) aspiration for that jnAna is harboured in the mind. After all, the essence of sweetness of the object worth remembering, is found and experienced in the remembering or recalling activity itself. Thus, the unboundedness or the limitlessness of the sweetness of the object worth remembering (god) is also described. See "ninaindennuLLE ninRu, nekkum kaNgal ashum pozhuga, ninaindirundE shiramam thlrndhEn nEmi nediyaavanE" graced by periyAzhvAr based on this concept alone.

Also read "nAhantu sakhyo bhajato (a)pi jantUn.....tadva: pratiyAtu sAdhunA" in BhAgavatam 10-32-21,22,23.

Meaning: Krishna said to gopis "Oh friends! Just to make their meditation of mine uninterrupted, I do not show up before the living beings who are devoted to me. Girls! just as a moneyed man who loses all his riches becomes filled with the thought of the lost riches and so does not think of anything else, so also, I vanished from your sight, so that you who left behind all your family world, may develop stronger thoughts regarding Me. Oh dears! you should not feel jealous and dejected with me on that account. I cannot fully well repay you all even by the ages of angels, for mingling with me without any sort of crookedness. Let your chains of bondage to samsAra get unlocked for having cut asunder your bondages to your families, houses and husbands and children and having come to enjoy my company. That is my gift to you."

Sri:
Srimathe Ramanujaya Nama:

Jitante Stotram

Stotram 13

na kAma kaluSham chittam mama tE pAdayOs sthitam |
kAmaYE vaiShNavatvam tu sarva janmasu kEvalam ||

Meaning:

tE -- Your
pAdayO: -- at the feet
sthitam -- staying fixed
mama chittam -- my mind
kAma kaluSham na -- is not turbid with other desires
sarva janmasu -- in all births
vaiShNavatvam tu kEvalam -- only the virtue of being a vaiShNava
kAmaYE-- I desire

Introduction:

(na kAma kaluSham ityAdi) By this shloka it is said that, my goal is only the pleasure of obedience (pAratantryam) and dedication to You alone. God asks " Earlier, paramapadam was the desired goal, then there was the plea to eliminate the fear of samsAra, then not wanting any of these things, only jnanam was prayed for as adequate, then not wanting that jnanam too, only the manoratha or unfulfilled longing was prayed for, now after sanctioning several births which delay the union with the final goal, why is there a retraction of words and change desire at every step. Is it not fair to decide correctly and ask for one single purushArtha?", the reply is, "this evolution of prayers is not a retraction of words or change of desires. For the purpose of serving You, I prayed for granting parama padam which is a secluded place; I prayed to remove the fear of samsAra since it is antagonistic for Your service; being impressed by Your extreme enjoyability, I prayed for the jnAnam regarding Your svarUpa as sufficient; I cherished even several births (though they would delay my union with You) mainly because of the great sweetness of that jnanam (I could spend my lives happily contemplating on that jnAnam); of course, these are all coincidental. My main desire is still that pleasure of pAratantryam or obedience to You, which I expressed at the beginning as "namastE astu". Thus, the ultimate purushArtham is finalised.

Commentary:

(tE pAdayO: sthitam me mana: na kAma kaluSham) As You are an eternal master and are extremely enjoyable, my mind dwelling on Your feet, does not become agitated by other personal desires as purushArtham. As described in "jitam te pundarikAkSha", You came near me in my habitat, showed me Your face and generated great interest in You, and so I am familiar with Your eternal lordship and extreme enjoyability.

(sthitam - samsthitam) established firmly. As cited in "yasyAsmi" (in yajurbrAhmanam and SrirangarAjastavam-- To whom I am the belonging, I shall not leave Him and go to other person) my servitude to You is not something incidental but as in "guNair dAsyam upAgata:" (Lakshmana and Hanuman in Srimad Ramayanam) my servitude to You has come about owing to Your beautiful rUpa and svarUpa and therefore, my mind which has fallen for You, will never again leave Your feet and drift towards other sense objects (vishayAntaram).

(mama chittam) As in "en mananE" (tiruvAymozhi 1.1.1), the chetana affectionately calls his mind which has benefited him a lot. (vaiShNavatvam tu) The word 'tu' is for emphasis. VaiShNavatvam can mean the pleasure of pAratantryam to God or the virtue of being cooperative to the God. The phrases "Etam

Anandamayam AtmAnam upasamkrAmati"; "anusancharan"; "yEna yEna dhAtA gachchati, tEna tEna saha gachchati - chchAyA vA sattvam anugachchEt" from the vedAntas proclaim that pAratantryam or obedience to Lord alone is the puruSahArtham. Even Lakshmana said to PerumAL in Srimad Ramayanam "kuruShva mAm anucharam".

Stotram 14

ityEvamanayA stutyA stutvA dEvam dinE dinE |
kimkarO(a)smlti chAtmAnam dEvAyaivam nivEdayEt ||

Meaning:

iti Evam -- In this way
anayA stutyA -- by way of this stotram
dEvam -- the God
dinE dinE -- everyday
stutvA -- having prayed
kimkara: asmi iti cha -- that I should be your server
dEvAya -- To the master
Evam -- thus
nivEdayEt -- one should offer his soul (to the Lord)

Introduction:

(ityEvam etc) A person who has no understanding and thinking of what was described in the shlokams stated hitherto, should recite these shlokams every day and solicit for service to the Lord and offer his soul to the Lord.

Commentary:

"iti " and "Evam" indicate the characteristics of the words and the meanings respectively. By this is indicated the superiority of this Jitante from among other Jitante stotrams (there are in all, five Jitante stotrams).

(anayA stutyA) As cited in "jitanta iti mantrENa" this was proclaimed as a mantram in other regions. In our region, it has been denoted as a stotram. What is the reason? Well, as in "mantAram trAyata iti mantra:", it uplifts one who utters it as a mantra. If the Lord who is a "stavaya" and "stavapriya" (eulogisable and lover of eulogy), listens to it, His face will bloom with gladness and hence it is called stotram. (dEvam) As in "sAkShAd deva: purANO(a)sau" He is an eternal God.

(dinE dinE) For a person who has comprehended the spirit of these shlokams, some infrequent recitation may be adequate. For others, this stotram should be recited every day.

(kimkara: asmi etc) With a prayer that he would be a server and slave to the Lord, he will totally offer his soul at His feet. What is the purpose of such an action? If such a stotram which has been recited by distinguished persons, is recited even by ordinary mortals (who are priding of their body as the soul), then the Lord will think of the latter as the former and equating them He will accept the latter too as He would the former. How come? A cow which has delivered a calf, can be first milked by keeping the real calf near her. Later, even if the real calf is taken away and a stuffed calf (thORkanRu) is placed by her side, she, still thinking of her real calf, yields and streams milk even to the stuffed calf. In the same vein, undeserving people also get the grace of God by reciting these shlokams which were recited by great people.